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OREGON OPERATIONS OFFICE

AUG 15 2016

EPA-REGION 10

Environmental Protection Agency  
805 SW Broadway, Suite 500  
Portland, OR 97205

RE: Harbor Comments

I've lived in Portland all of my life. I used to spend a lot of time on the Willamette River, and now my son spends a lot of time on the river. It's a place for residents to enjoy their free time, and it's a tourist attraction. The EPA's plan to spend close to or over one billion dollars to dredge the river for an extended period of time is a bad idea. We don't even know if it will work. It may cause more harm than good. And it's just relocating the problem to another area. I don't like the idea of throwing money at things when there's no guarantee that the outcome will even be satisfactory. If we don't have to spend the money, then we shouldn't.

I think it's good to be skeptical of an EPA plan that utilizes data from 2004. That's twelve years ago. The river is constantly moving and changing. Current studies have determined there to be a minimum of a forty-percent reduction in the contamination levels in the river since 2004, and we should not disregard the findings. Why dig up a river and possibly create more contamination if it's taking care of itself? Maybe things have settled, maybe there is contamination that has cleared up through natural means, but things have certainly changed for the better and disrupting that process will create problems.

It's good practice in general to start off with the least aggressive approach available. This gives us a better understanding of the situation, and in this case we know that there has been natural healing taking place without aggressive dredging procedures. That's a strong indication that we shouldn't be running in to disturb what is already taking place to restore the river. Tried and true is a better path to take. People are too quick to throw money at things, and who is paying for that cost? We are. We don't need to take on any unnecessary expenditures at this time. I don't like to see taxes or anything else go up to pay for something where we may end up in the same situation when all is said and done.

We should always be looking at what the end result is going to be moving forward. Is the end result going to be satisfactory or is the situation going to be made worse? Dredging the Willamette is likely to make the situation worse. It will be costly, invasive, and have a negative economic impact. We don't want our waterfront torn up for 10-20 years. It's just not an acceptable way to move forward. The river is a living, moving thing that is constantly changing. We should be doing everything in our power to create a better plan for cleaning up the Willamette.

Sincerely,

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Portland, OR 97230